

# Strategy Research Project

## Executing Military Family Programs in the New Fiscal Reality

by

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Class of 2013

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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## **Abstract**

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Army leaders are finding it difficult to sustain all Army programs during times of fiscal austerity. Family programs are of high priority to the Army, however, require thorough examination to identify redundant and inefficient programs. General Odierno's vision stressed that Senior and garrison commanders would have to determine the particular family program needs for their specific installations. In order for Senior and garrison commanders to better understand military family programs, this SRP looks at the historical origins and evolution of family programs and validates the continued need for such programs. Additionally, this research project educates Senior and garrison commanders by highlighting services best practices for military family programs, using characteristics recommended by Dr. Davis at the 2009 National Leadership Summit on Military Families. This SRP concludes with recommendation of how to incorporate family program knowledge into the professional military education of Senior and garrison commanders.





## **Executing Military Family Programs in the New Fiscal Reality**

We must care for one of our most precious resources — the children and families of our soldiers.

—General John A. Wickham, Jr<sup>1</sup>.

Why should the Army sustain its family programs in the forthcoming era of fiscal austerity? This is one question facing Army leaders. At the annual Association of United States Army conference, the Army Chief of Staff (CSA) shared his vision of Army families. General Odierno reaffirmed that “The strength of our Nation is our Army; the strength of our Army is our Soldiers; the strength of our Soldiers is our Families.”<sup>2</sup> He envisioned the Army, as a high priority, fully funding Army Family programs.<sup>3</sup> Odierno also cautioned that the Army has to “eliminate programs that aren’t efficient enough and aren’t gaining enough for our families and invest in the programs that are truly making a difference.”<sup>4</sup> So the CSA made it clear that family programs would not be arbitrarily discontinued; rather, he stressed that installation leaders and garrison commanders must determine particular family program needs and seek possible solutions to local family issues.<sup>5</sup>

Given the CSA's guidance, the next imperative for Army leaders is to empower senior and garrison commanders with the capability to create family programs that best suit their installations. This research project examines the history of military families to understanding contemporary challenges. It explores the value of Army family programs as support of Army missions. Next, it reviews current Army family policy guidelines from the Office of Secretary Defense (OSD) and examines military family programs across all Services to identify options to strengthen current Army programs. Lastly, it concludes

with recommended ways to educate senior and garrison commanders on tailoring their family programs to meet their specific installation requirements.

### History of Military Families

American military families have had a role in our military since the inception of the Continental Army. Early military families were considered camp-followers; they accompanied their soldiers from station to station with no support from or recognition of their existence by the Army.<sup>6</sup> The first formal recognition of veterans and military families came in President Lincoln's 1865 Second Inauguration Address. The Union's Commander in Chief acknowledged the nation's obligation "to care for him those who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and orphans."<sup>7</sup> His proclamation led to formal recognition of basic family needs in Army Regulations by the late 1800s. These benefits however were only for officers and senior non-commissioned officers (NCOs).<sup>8</sup> Local commanders and their wives' groups volunteered to do what they could on a case-by-case basis to help spouses of enlisted soldiers and their children as problems arose.<sup>9</sup>

The United States for the first time deployed large numbers of military personnel abroad during World War I. In response to these deployments, Congress became involved in family programs. In 1917, Congress passed the first ever system of family allotments, which included financial benefits and allowances that specifically targeted soldiers' families.<sup>10</sup> Subsequently, the massive U.S. military build-up of World War II quickly stressed the existing military family systems. The military found ways to provide emergency support for families by using post funds or chapel pantries. Likewise, military families received support from local charitable organizations and referrals to the

American Red Cross.<sup>11</sup> Recognition of these haphazard and ad hoc support activities led to the establishment of the Army Emergency Relief Fund on 5 February 1942.<sup>12</sup>

As the military began an immense drawdown following World War II, senior Army leaders neglected family programs. As a matter of culture and policy, the Army began to discourage enlisted personnel from marrying. But this policy ran counter to the trends of increasing post war marriage following the return of soldiers from conflict.<sup>13</sup>

Subsequently, military personnel were increasingly accompanied by spouses and children in their duty assignments. The growing number of family members became a particular problem with overseas assignments with American family communities springing up outside of U.S. bases in Germany, Korea, and Japan.<sup>14</sup> A 1952 study by Elizabeth Wickenden cited the appalling neglect of Army family members due to the lack of basic social services.<sup>15</sup> By 1960, Army family members outnumbered uniformed personnel; chaplain programs were unable to provide them with adequate support.

In response to this growing family population, the Army established a family support program under the Deputy Chief of Staff G1.<sup>16</sup> In 1963, an Army Community Services program was proposed to support Army families. Army leaders rejected this proposal, claiming they were not leading a social services corps.<sup>17</sup> By 1965 Army leaders had reassessed this dismissal of this need for support and subsequently established Army Community Services with the mission of delivering Army family programs.<sup>18</sup>

With the creation of the All Volunteer Force in 1973, the Army once again reassessed its family programs because of the need to recruit soldiers to replenish its ranks with the end of conscription. Army leaders then began to recognize the link

between a quality force and family support. To sustain the all-volunteer force, more and better family programs were needed.<sup>19</sup> In 1982, the Army established the first Army family liaison office at Headquarters Department of Army (HQDA). Its mission was to service the increasing need of Army families.<sup>20</sup>

In 1983 General Wickham, then Chief of Staff of the Army, recognized the necessity for the Army to clearly articulate a philosophy of how the Army would take care of its families, then and in the future. He envisioned a partnership between the Army and its families. He therefore directed the dismissal of ad hoc and piecemeal approaches that he felt the Army had previously relied on to take care of its families.<sup>21</sup> In his white paper "The Army Family", Wickham cited the changing needs of the Army as it recruited the All Volunteer Force. His guidance led to the creation of the 1984 Army Family Action Plan.<sup>22</sup> The AFAP, a forum that enabled Army families to address significant issue to the Army leadership, has been a cornerstone of Army family programs since its inception. Over several AFAP iterations, the Army eventually identified a need to better educate military spouses.<sup>23</sup> In 1994, the Army Family Team Building Program was introduced: its mission was to better inform and educate military spouses about the Army and to familiarize them with family programs available to soldiers and their families.<sup>24</sup>

In 2003, the Army's demographics continued to change. Since 1983, significantly more female soldiers were serving on active duty (15 percent), and more dual military families were serving (11 percent).<sup>25</sup> This demographic change coupled with ongoing deployments to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), led General Shinseki to publish, "The Army Family: A White Paper." General

Shinseki identified the need for improved childcare programs and infrastructure along with the requirement for Army leaders to be more aware of Army family issues.<sup>26</sup> His white paper provided his direction for Army family programs through October 2007 and led to the establishment of the Army Family Covenant by acting Secretary of Army Pete Geren and Army Chief of Staff George Casey.<sup>27</sup> This covenant was designed to sustain soldiers and their families in an era of persistent conflict. It focused on seven key areas:

- standardizing and funding family programs and services
- providing top quality health care
- improving housing
- ensuring excellence in schools, youth programs, and childcare
- expanding employment and educational opportunities for families
- improving soldier quality of life
- providing soldiers and their families with a supportive environment in which they can live and thrive

The Army Family Covenant has led to the establishment of several Army programs designed to support Army families in an era of multiple deployments and two major conflicts.<sup>28</sup> As the Department of Defense (DOD) budget declines over the next several years, as forecast by the U.S. civilian leadership, family programs should be re-evaluated to ensure Army families are supported by the quality programs they need and the Army can afford.

### Need for Family Programs

Critics of family programs question the Army's expenditure of valuable resources on families rather than other programs (e.g., operational readiness). I saw this

skepticism firsthand while serving as garrison commander of United States Army Garrison Camp Casey, Korea. Prior to January 2009, Camp Casey, Korea, was a family-restricted area. When U.S. Forces Korea opened up the community to allow for family tours, I was confronted by many retirees and Department of Army civilians about why we were spending money to bring families to this area and not continuing to spend all of our garrison assets on soldier programs. Fortunately, senior leaders were quick to respond that it supported readiness.

The Army has recognized through its policy and resourcing since the early 1970s that effective family care contributes to overall military readiness. Wickham's 1983 Army White Paper linked Family Programs directly to readiness and retention—and thus to the success of the Army.<sup>29</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen reinforced these views:

Our readiness to be able to carry out our mission as United States military is directly impacted, fully integrated, by how our families are taken care of, paid attention to, and that is a fundamental readiness issue.... And there's a real basic principle here for all of us in the military--been that way for long time. If it's not going well at home, it's not going well where I am. I cannot focus; I can't stay focused on what's going on.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to the affirmation by military leaders of the need for family programs, sociologists link the care of military families to the readiness of the force. Dr. M. W. Segal concluded that the more the armed forces respond to family needs, the greater the commitment of both service members and their families to the military.<sup>31</sup> She further asserted that if the military views the family as an outside influence with which it competes, the more likely service members and families will not contribute to the demands of their organization. Segal offered it is in the military's best interest to

incorporate the family and adapt to it, which will promote positive organizational change among all military services.<sup>32</sup>

#### Office of the Secretary Defense Family Policy Guidelines and Service Execution

To monitor family programs and provide a common framework for the services to execute, the Office of Secretary Defense for Military Community and Family Policy has oversight of policy and guidance to the services. This Office has four primary missions. First, it provides family support policies and programs in such areas as family center operations, child care, youth programs, family advocacy, relocation, transition support services, and support during mobilization and deployment. Second, it provides the policy and management direction for dependents' education programs, both stateside and overseas, to ensure that educational services are uniformly of high quality. Third, it establishes program policy for sustaining its mission and for basic community programs for Morale, Welfare, and Recreation; for Voluntary and Post-Secondary Education; and for coordination with non-profit agencies such as the Red Cross, Armed Services Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), and the United Service Organization (USO). Finally, it provides policy and program oversight to ensure that military community quality-of-life programs are designed and executed to support the needs of the post-drawdown force and the defense mission.<sup>33</sup>

In 2009, the Military Community and Family Policy Branch hosted a National Leadership Summit on Military Families to help the services identify their unique and common problems and to recognize effective coordination and implementation of programs that address these unique and common problems. This Summit brought together scholars and other professionals from across the United States, along with

military family members, to discuss the particular military families' problems and potential solutions.<sup>34</sup> A key presenter at this conference was Dr. Beth Allen Davis, who offered a new approach for family programs. She concluded that family programs need to capitalize on the opportunities of virtual support for young technologically savvy families. These programs should recognize the integral role of family and enable military families to function resiliently. Her approach emphasized several key characteristics of affecting family programs. According to Davis, effective Army family programs should be:

- preventative – the focus should be on preventing unavoidable situations and conditions, such as child abuse
- accessible – programs and services need to be readily available to all military families - Active Duty, Reserve, or National Guard – and remain available regardless of whether they return to their home of record after deployment
- family-centered – children need to be assessed, monitored, and treated in the context of their family and its support structure
- outreachable – families can become overwhelmed by the responsibilities of deployment, so family program representatives should come to the families at such times to assist single parents and reduce stress on spouses whose mates are in danger. Such family members often do not seek support
- for all ages – because installation facilities serve only half of military school children, services must also be provided in daycare and other facilities



- community-based – military and social support programs should be available in local communities where off-site families reside, including services to assist with school, childcare, financial and legal issues, housing, and assignments.<sup>35</sup>

The information shared during this Summit enabled installation leaders to tailor their programs to their unique needs.

Based on OSD Military Community and Family Policy Branch policy guidance, the armed services develop and execute family programs tailored to the unique service requirements. For example, the U.S. Army assigns the execution of these family programs to the Army's Installation Management Command (IMCOM) G9, Family Moral Welfare and Recreation. IMCOM G9 refines policy and standardizes family programs across the Army. This guidance is then passed down to the IMCOM regions and distributed to Army garrisons for implementation. Based on the CSA's guidance of tailoring programs to fit the needs of an installation, the policy of the same standardized programs for every installation should be relooked.

### Military Family Programs

In this time of looming fiscal adversity—with the reality of a smaller DOD budget and the necessary reassessment of programs—it is essential that our armed services share best practices for family programs. After a review of the 2009 Quadrennial Quality of Life Review, where services highlighted their key family initiatives, and referring to Davis' key characteristics of effective family practice programs, this SRP elaborates on the services' best practices for family programs. These highlighted best practice family programs should be included in a menu of options that garrison commanders can implement based on their unique installation requirements.

## Delivery Mechanisms

The four armed services use similar delivery methods for execution and implementation of their family programs, which align with Davis' recommended characteristics of accessibility, family-centeredness, and community based programs. The Navy Installation Command through its Navy Fleet and Family Support Centers manages Navy Family Support Initiatives.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, to ensure that family needs are met, the Navy places family support staffs directly within its organizations, such as, Navy Seals, Expeditionary Combat Readiness Center, and Navy Processing sites for individual augmentees.<sup>37</sup> The U.S. Marines Corps delivers its family programs through highly trained staff at Marine Corps Community Service Centers.<sup>38</sup> These service centers are located at Marine bases and are readily accessible to Marine Corps families. In 2009 as part of the year of the Air Force Family, the U.S. Air Force re-named all of its readiness centers as Airmen and Family Readiness Centers. As a symbolic gesture, Air Force leaders dedicated these centers to Air Force families. In accord with Davis' recommendation, the Air Force is stressing the importance of family-centered programs.<sup>39</sup>

The Army continues to use the family program delivery organization that it adopted in 1965--the Army Community Service Center.<sup>40</sup> In response to ongoing combat operations, the Army identified the need for expanded assistance to families of wounded soldiers. Accordingly, the Army established Soldier Family Assistance Centers (SFACs) at 32 Army installations. This recommended accessibility enables SFACs to link wounded soldiers and their families, providing services to foster physical, spiritual, and mental healing.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, ongoing combat operations have prompted Army leaders to provide community-based services apart from Army installations. These

services are required by reserve force soldiers who have been activated, or families of soldiers who moved away from Army installations while their soldier was deployed. To alleviate this problem the Army stood up the Army Integrated Family Support Network, which is designed to allow families to receive services and receive information in person, over the phone, or over the internet. This program enables the Army to provide equal levels of support to Active Duty and Reserve soldiers and their families.<sup>42</sup>

A final delivery mechanism that is both community-based and assessable to Army families is the Army Family Action Plan (AFAP). AFAP serves as a link between soldiers, civilians, retirees, and family to Senior Army Leadership through the use of online submissions for off-site military families and through the use of family forums readily available to on-site families. This program seeks to inform and shape current Army Family Program policies and legislation to better meet the contemporary needs of Army Families. Some of the key changes promoted by the AFAP were the mandatory reinstatement of post mobilization benefits health benefits for Reservists and the expansion of VA education benefits for surviving spouses.<sup>43</sup>

### Youth Programs

In recent years the DoD and the armed services conducted various research and surveys to identify the need for youth programs for service members and their families. The 2008 DOD survey of active duty spouses concluded that managing childcare during deployment was a problem for 65 percent of military spouses. Forty-seven percent of military spouses with children stated that they had additional childcare costs during deployment, and 49 percent of military spouses reported that finding childcare during deployments was an unfamiliar challenge because it was not needed prior to the deployment.<sup>44</sup> The Military Family Research Institute highlights this problem; it reports

that youth programs are critically needed because military members with children plan to stay in the service at a higher rate, 71 percent, than service members without children, which was only 52 percent in 2009.<sup>45</sup> The 2009 Air Force Family RAND Survey concluded that the lack of childcare is an issue for military readiness.<sup>46</sup> An earlier survey of military parents and dual military spouses reported that "a lack of childcare had kept them from reporting for duty, particularly due to lengthy searches for appropriate care following a birth or a permanent change of station."<sup>47</sup> The survey also revealed difficulties of obtaining off-post childcare. It showed how availability was affected by constrained federal and state budgets, indicating that many states were regressing in their childcare efforts.<sup>48</sup>

Declining off- base availability of child care is of particular concern to the United States Navy. The 2006 Navy spouse's survey indicated that the primary source of child care for Navy spouses was off-base community childcare centers.<sup>49</sup> The availability of childcare and youth programs is a major concern to all military service members, especially to Army families which continue to grow. This growth is demonstrated through data obtained in the "What We Know About Army Families 2007 Update." The update shows Army families include more than "450,000 children who were 18 years or younger; more than half (51%) were under 7 years of age."<sup>50</sup>

Based on family surveys, needs assessments, and the OSD Military Community and Family Policy Branch policies for youth programs, the armed services have various childcare and youth program initiatives. Childcare programs are top priority for all services; many of these programs conform with the characteristics of Davis' recommended approaches. The U.S. Air Force has implemented two community-based

childcare initiatives. First, the Air Force Returning Home Care Program gives Airmen 16 hours of free childcare upon returning home from deployment. Second, the Air Force Childcare Subsidy Program compensates Airmen for home childcare at the rates they would have paid at Air Force on-base facilities.<sup>51</sup>

Similar to the Air Force subsidized childcare for returning airmen, the U.S. Marine Corp has created a program called U.S. Marine Corp Enhanced Childcare Support. It offers emergency childcare free of charge for all Marine families in need. This is a preventative program which helps work prevent child neglect and other stressful circumstances. Another childcare initiative implemented by the Marine Corps and Army focuses on helping families find and select childcare and youth programs in their local communities.<sup>52</sup> The only difference between the Marine Corps Military Childcare in Your Neighborhood and the Army School-Age Programs in Your Neighborhood is that the Army program focuses on school-age care, whereas the Marine Corps program is for children of all ages.<sup>53</sup> The latest Army childcare initiative is the Army Family Childcare Online program. It provides virtual access of family homecare providers for those parents who wish to use off-base childcare. Through this program, local Army childcare staff is able to monitor family homecare providers, fill vacancies, and provide Army families with affordable, regulated, and quality childcare.<sup>54</sup> These programs provide one of Dr. Davis' key characteristics of accessibility, and they can be shared by all services as a best practice.

Although childcare is top priority for all military services, there is a demonstrated need for programs designed to fulfill a growing school-age population. The services are providing, as Davis recommends, programs for children of all ages. The Air Force,

Army, and Navy have partnered with the National 4-H Headquarters to bring programs to military installations across the U.S. These programs offer military youth a variety of opportunities such as experience in agricultural technology labs.<sup>55</sup> In addition to the 4-H clubs, the Air Force has introduced the Air Force Youth Camping program for military youth. These camps are designed to help youth between the ages of 6 and 18 develop their self-esteem and to resist negative pressures.<sup>56</sup> The Navy in cooperation with non-government agencies has instituted its own youth camps. For example, Operation Purple Summer Camp brings together youth of deployed sailors to help build coping skills and support networks so these young people can better handle life's ups and downs.<sup>57</sup> Other programs that reach out to today's military youth include programs like the U.S. Navy Fit Factor and U.S. Marine Corps' Operation Hero Program. The Fit Factor program is designed to help military youth make healthier choices and avoid the nation's ever-growing childhood obesity problem. The Operation Hero Program, in conjunction with the Armed Services Young Men's Christian Association, provides children between 6 and 12 years of age with after-school tutoring and mentoring services.<sup>58</sup>

The Army also has several service-unique programs that help youth cope with today's military youth issues. The Army Teen Panel serves as a voice for Army youth; it meets regularly with senior Army leaders to enable them to understand and address today's youth concerns.<sup>59</sup> Army Youth Technology Labs are designed to increase young people's communications with deployed parents. They give Army youth access to computer work stations, printers, scanners, and digital video cameras.<sup>60</sup>

The What We Know About Families Update 2007 reported that relocation is more stressful for military adolescents than for other military children. Roughly two-fifths of high school age children in Army families are significantly affected by a permanent change of station (PCS) during high school. The Update cited such problems as social adjustments, falling behind in course work, and feeling under challenged.<sup>61</sup> To address these issues, the Army developed the Army Student- to-Student Program, which is designed to help new students integrate successfully into the new school systems.<sup>62</sup>

Delivery of youth programs to the Reserve Component (RC) families has become extremely important to the military services because Reserve families are experiencing circumstances similar to those of Active Component (AC) families. Their families share similar stresses. In addition, RC families are challenged by geographic dispersion. Davis emphasizes the need to make family services accessible to family members of all ages. The Air Force has developed the Air Force Community Care Program that is designed to provide free home care for Reserve and Guard families during their scheduled drill weekends. Another Air Force program is the Air Force Operation Military Childcare, which provides subsidized child care for Air National Guard and Reserve members whose children are cared for in state-licensed, off-installation homes while the Reserve member serves on active duty.<sup>63</sup> The Army has a similar program also called Operation Military Childcare; this community-based initiative locates and subsidizes childcare for geographically dispersed AC, RC, and Guard families while their soldier is deployed.<sup>64</sup> The Air Force Mission Youth Outreach Program has established a partnership between the Air Force and the Boys and Girls Club of America; this program

provides one-year free memberships in youth programs for children of RC and AC personnel when the children do not reside near a military installation.<sup>65</sup>

### Deployment Support

Eleven years of war have considerably stressed military families. Davis has found that families can become overwhelmed by responsibilities of deployment. Single military parents are especially vulnerable. And spouses whose marital partners are in danger endure much stress. Davis emphasizes the need for outreach-able and preventative family programs.<sup>66</sup> In an effort to help families cope with more frequent and less predictable separations, the services have designed a variety of family deployment support programs. One deployment support program that has greatly expanded access to childcare among military families is the Air Force Give Parents A Break Program. This program is designed to give parents some respite by providing them with free childcare for a few hours a month while their Airmen are deployed. This initiative seeks to alleviate parental stresses unique to deployment.<sup>67</sup>

Another stress associated with deployment is caused by limited communications between the family and a service member. The Active Duty Spouses Survey of 2008 found that 79 percent of junior enlisted spouses cited loneliness as a major problem during their service members' most recent deployment.<sup>68</sup> In an effort to alleviate this problem, the Air Force has established the Air Force Stay Connected Deployment Kit. This kit provides items for Airmen and their families before deployments so that families may stay connected while the Airmen is deployed, such as: journals, cameras, pens, caps, and backpacks.<sup>69</sup> The Marines developed their own program called Motomail. This mail alternative program gives Marine families access to a website over which they can send a letter to a deployed Marine within a particular time frame, usually 24 hours.<sup>70</sup>



During deployments, military families also need to communicate with the military command. Through deployment support programs like the Air Force Key Spouse Program, Army Family Readiness Groups, and the Family Ombudsman Program, military families are able to engage and communicate with various levels of leadership and members of the community. The Air Force Key Spouse Program builds partnerships between key spouses in a unit. The Airmen and Family Readiness Center is designed to inform, support, and refer family members to appropriate agencies while their Airmen are deployed.<sup>71</sup> Army Family Readiness Groups are formed to enhance communications between family members and service providers in the Army and in the local community.<sup>72</sup> Recent Army surveys indicate that communications between the family members and their soldiers' commands are greatly enhanced through a military family's involvement with Family Readiness Groups. Forty percent of spouses surveyed stated that they have received assistance from their Family Readiness Group during times of deployment; likewise, over fifty percent of spouses surveyed stated they have had a positive experience with their Family Readiness Group during a recent deployment.<sup>73</sup>

Given these positive responses from active military spouses, the Army decided to establish Army Virtual Family Readiness Centers to support the Reservists in an outreach initiative. These web-based Family Readiness Centers are designed to take the place of a traditional Family Readiness Groups for National Guard and Reserve soldiers and for families of AC personnel when geographically separated. By means of these virtual Family Readiness Groups, family members are able to maintain communications with a support group.<sup>74</sup> Although the Air Force and Army have strong

support and readiness programs, the Navy has the most formally structured family-to-leadership communication programs.

The Navy Family Ombudsman Program was created on September 14, 1970 by the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Elmo Zumwalt. A key component of the program requires every command afloat or ashore to formally appoint an Ombudsman.<sup>75</sup> The Ombudsman then monitors this program, which includes the preventative, accessible, and outreach-able characteristics recommended by Davis. The Ombudsman program is designed to give commanders greater understanding of the welfare of their commands' families. It enables the commands and their families to better prepare to meet emergency situations.<sup>76</sup> A 2006 Navy survey indicated that the program was not performing up to the Navy's expectations because fewer than 1/3 of Navy spouses knew their Ombudsman. The Navy then launched some initiatives to strengthen, revitalize, and improve the Ombudsman program. These initiatives included more timely dissemination of information and creation of an Ombudsman registry to help family members identify their Ombudsman.<sup>77</sup>

While the Ombudsman Program tends to focus on communication between Navy families and their units, the Navy identified a requirement to support its individual augmentee force with an accessible program as described by Davis in her address to the National Leadership Summit. In 2009, 13,000 sailors were deployed as individual augmentees assigned to Army and Marine Corps units in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other sites around the world. Forty percent of these individuals were active component (AC), and sixty percent came from the Reserves.<sup>78</sup> Deployments of individual augmentees were new to Navy families. To better serve and communicate with the augmentees'

families, the Navy designed its Individual Augmentee Program. This program was designed to support and educate Navy families of individual augmentees through use of the web while their sailor was deployed. Via the web, families were provided a handbook that focused on individual augmentees' preparation, readiness, and reunion issues. It also featured a monthly individual augmentee family connection newsletter. Half of the families that were provided this support have requested continuing contact and support.<sup>79</sup>

### Family Readiness Support

Another group of family programs have been established to enhance the overall readiness of the military family. Issues such as domestic violence, new parent support, financial readiness, and spouse employment are all related to family readiness. They are key factors in family resiliency. The services have addressed these critical issues in preventative, accessible, and community-based programs. To prevent and counter domestic violence, the Army and the Air Force offer relevant programs through their Family Advocacy Programs. These programs offer a comprehensive range of services intended to strengthen service members and their families prior to, during, and post deployments. They focus on prevention and intervention of domestic abuse and neglect. The Air Force currently has 79 advocacy programs on Air Force bases worldwide; this program handles a case load of between 7,000 and 10,000 family maltreatment cases annually.<sup>80</sup> Another program that coordinates with the Family Advocacy Program is the New Parent Support Program offered by the Air Force, Marines, and Army to at-risk families with children under three, or to women who are pregnant. During home visits by qualified nurses and social workers, assessments, education, and support are provided for those identified as at risk for family violence.<sup>81</sup>

Additional programs that help build resilient military families are needed in the area of financial planning. The Defense Manpower Data Center and status-of-force surveys conducted between 2003 and 2008 revealed that 37 percent of E1 thru E4's claim they have financial problems.<sup>82</sup> Through its research conducted in the 2007 Navy Leadership survey, the Navy found that financial problems are one of the top 5 concerns of Navy sailors. The Navy Personal Financial Management Program increased the number of accredited financial counselors available to work one on one with sailors and family members to help them develop a viable financial plan. This program provides specifically tailored educational programs; it partners with on-base financial institutions, consumer awareness experts, and industry leaders to assist sailors and their families manage their finances. This Navy Program was awarded the 2006 Outstanding Education Program of the Year by the Association of Financial Counseling, Planning, and Education.<sup>83</sup>

The Navy is not only concerned about its sailors and family member's financial preparedness, it is also concerned about Navy families' preparedness for natural disasters or other emergencies. The Navy Personnel and Family Preparedness Program consists of two parts: First, Operation Prepare is a themed tool box consisting of a message to be informed, have a plan, and make a kit; second, the Navy's accountability and assessment system enables Navy commanders to quickly account for sailors and their families living on and off the installation and to assess their needs during natural disaster or terrorist events. This system was used successfully during the 2006 California wildfire season.<sup>84</sup>

A final program recently enacted to help military families become more resilient and to remain stable after a change of duty station is the Spouse Employment Support Programs. Research of all four services and the Department of Defense indicate that spouse employment remains a top concern for military families. A recent DoD survey indicates that 60 percent of spouses try to find employment at their new duty location; however, only 2/3 of those surveyed found work, while 11 percent stopped looking.<sup>85</sup> In 2005, Rand found that "military wives on average are employed at lower rates and earn less than civilian wives." To address this issue, the Army created the Army Spouse Employment Partnership, which encourages private sector companies and the federal government to work with the military to improve spouse employment opportunities. As of September 2007, these organizations had hired over 23,000 military spouses.<sup>86</sup>

### Conclusion

Previous Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates aptly observed, "That when young Americans step forward of their own free will to serve, they do so with the expectation that they and their families will be properly taken care of..."<sup>87</sup> As Army leaders decide how to sustain Army family programs during the current fiscal austerity, they should consider the current Army Chief of Staff's vision. Sharing his vision, General Odierno has declared that the Army will continue to spend much of its resources on family programs because they are a high priority.<sup>88</sup> This, however, does not mean the Army should fund ineffective or redundant programs. The CSA also directed that garrison commanders are responsible for determining their particular family program needs and for recommending solutions to Army family problems since every post has different quality-of-life issues.

Given the Chief of Staff's guidance, Army leaders must support IMCOM and related organizations in carrying out the CSA's vision. Senior and garrison commanders should be empowered with the knowledge they need to determine what family programs will best suit their installations. This means that senior and garrison commanders need to understand the strategic (OSD/IMCOM), operational (Regional), and tactical (Installations) guidance on family programs. This education and knowledge should be provided to incoming commanders as they attend the garrison and senior commander courses. Further, DoD's senior service colleges should offer a Garrison Commanders as Strategic Leaders elective at the senior service colleges. This course would enable the Army not only to share knowledge and educate garrison commanders of the important and available programs to military family, but also to educate other senior army leaders about the programs that are available to the families of the soldiers they are leading. The historical sketch of military families included in this research project should also be provided to senior and garrison commanders as a means of better understanding the origins and evolution of family programs.

This SRP validated the need for family programs and pointed out how family programs support Army missions. Next, this paper reviewed family policy guidelines from the Office of Secretary Defense and noted how these policy guidelines are standardized at IMCOM G9. Significantly, as the Army fulfills the CSA's vision, IMCOM G9 will have to reconsider how it standardizes military family programs to enable senior and garrison commanders to tailor family programs offered on their installations more effectively and efficiently. Individual programs must respond to the specific needs of military personnel and families assigned to given installation. Lastly, this paper briefly

reviewed military family programs across all services to show how they have been designed with the characteristics advised by Dr. Davis. This review highlighted best practices across the armed services. Senior and garrison commanders can consider these program options as they tailor their family support programs to best serve their installations' soldiers and their soldiers' families.

## Endnotes

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